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LINCOLN



KING'S

POEMS

POCKET EDITION

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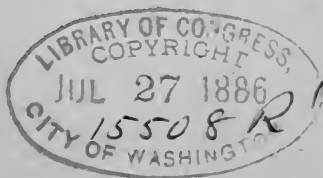
LINCOLN KING'S

POEMS.

Pocket Edition.

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1886.



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1886.

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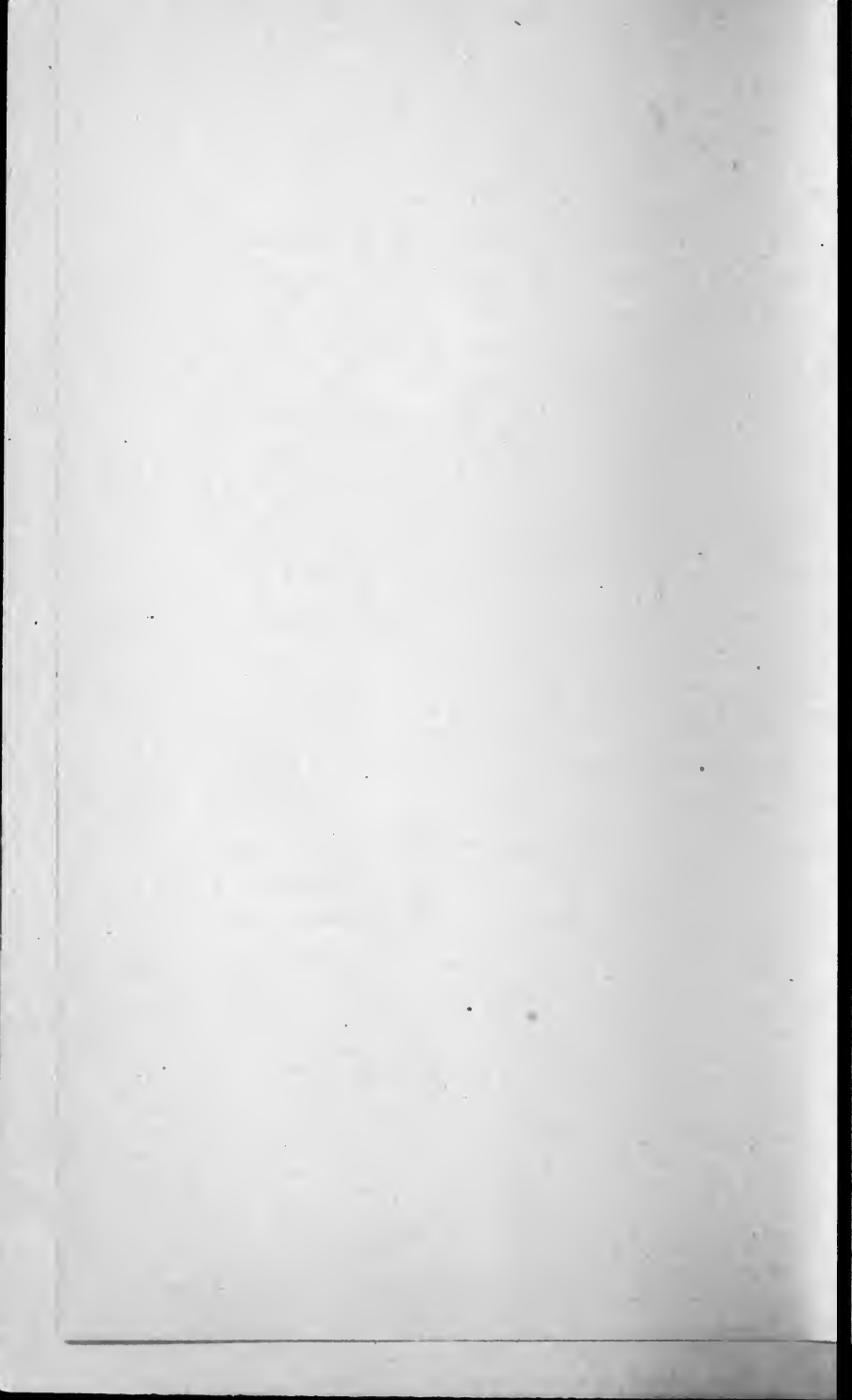
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TO

The Unfortunate and the Oppressed,

This Humble Volume

Is Most Respectfully Dedicated.



## ❖ PREFACE. ❖

---

This small volume is published with the hope that it may comfort and encourage them to whom it is dedicated,

And if it soothe one aching heart,

Or cool a single burning tear,

the author's work will not have been in vain.

They, who find naught in the work to praise, and whose souls be unmoved by the simple strains, will please be sparing of adverse criticism, and be not hasty to condemn, but let the little messenger go on its way unmolested, and let it do, if it can, the work designed for it.

They, who recline in the lap of Prosperity, cheered by Fortune's fickle smile, may, on the morrow, tread the depths of adversity. Then who will need, more than they, words of comfort and inspiration? Therefore, let not the prosperous scoff at any balm offered to the unfortunate and the oppressed, for "of the day and the hour knoweth no man" when he will mourn, and lend a willing ear to the comforter.

*Lincoln*

Marshalltown, Iowa, April 10, 1885.





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## I WOULD I WERE FREE!

---

I would I could sever the bonds

That girdle my soul about!

I would dash them away, and forever and  
aye

I would let my soul flow out—

Flow out in verse and song,

In melody's sweet refrain.

With musical chime and poetical rhyme

I would banish all thoughts of pain.

I would write upon grander themes

Than man ever had before,

And fill every line with the spirit divine,

And polish it o'er and o'er;

And the world would pause enthralled

By the grandeur of the strains,

And the poor, distressed, and sorely op-  
pressed,

Would laugh at their galling chains.

1884.

## THE STARS AND STRIPES.

---

O Stars and Stripes of freedom,  
Long may you float, in pride,  
From rampart, dome and mast-head,  
O'er every land and tide.  
May freemen ever echo  
This patriotic cry,  
"The Stars and Stripes forever!  
We conquer or we die!"

'Twas for the right and freedom  
That first you were unfurled—  
To serve a mighty NATION  
You since have roamed the world;  
And now you're bidden welcome  
By monarchs, far and near,  
And the noblest bow in honor  
When the Stars and Stripes appear.

For you have freemen fallen,  
On ghastly fields of blood,  
While life, with speed departing,  
Has ebbed in crimson flood.

Their loyalty has given  
To you undying fame—  
A great and fadeless glory—  
A proudly honored name.

Though oft have foes endeavored  
To hurl you from on high,  
You still are proudly streaming—  
You were not born to die.  
Then wave on in your glory,  
And may it never fade  
Till beams the sun in darkness,  
And the flight of time is stayed.

The men who first beheld you  
Have long since passed away,  
And grass has grown and withered  
Above their moldering clay;  
But you are calmly waving,  
And evermore shall wave,  
Till sounds the knell of freedom,  
And death has claimed the brave.

1879.

## TO SLEEP.\*

---

Sleep, thou demon, get thee from me !

Till my evening's work is done.

Why shouldst thou intrude upon me

When my task is just begun ?

Go ! I say, nor longer tarry.

Get thee back to thine abode !

Nor return to check my labors

Till the midnight cock hath crowed.

Seek thy friends ! For thou hast many.

Woo *them* to thy pleasant bowers !

*I* would fain hear yon old time-piece

Toll the knell of dying hours.

Visit those who'll bid thee welcome !

Seek the haunts of *other* men !

*I* would (rather than be sleeping)

Read and think and wield the pen.

1880.

\*One evening, as I sat thinking, I was overpowered by sleep, after a long and desperate struggle to continue my train of thought. I dozed, faintly struggling the while to regain consciousness, till I heard the clock strike eleven, and with a desperate effort roused myself and wrote the above rebuke to my tormentor.—*King*.

## LIGHT AND SHADE.

---

Life is made of light and shade,  
Part joy and part of sorrow,  
And though to-day be cold and gray,  
The sun may shine to-morrow.  
Then why should we rebellious be  
When tempests gather o'er us?  
Why should we dread, and fear to tread,  
The gloomy ways before us?

Life is made of light and shade,  
And so it must be ever.  
We strive in vain to break the chain—  
The two we cannot sever.  
Each cup of joy has some alloy,  
And pain embitters pleasure.  
Each life, though brief, must have of grief,  
As well as joy, a measure.

Life is made of light and shade,  
And though the soul be weary,  
And every night be void of light,  
And every day be dreary,

The gloomy mass of clouds shall pass—

The sun again shine o'er us.

The frowning pile shall don a smile—

Our ways be bright before us.

1884.



## WHENCE COME THE GREAT?

---

Whence come the great of every nation,  
And the names that shall indure,  
Ever gaining brighter glory?

From the rich, or from the poor?  
Hark! The world sends back the echo,  
"From the poor!"

Whence come the men who make the records  
Time and envy cannot soil?

From the petted sons of leisure,  
Or the hardened sons of toil?  
From the world comes back the echo,  
"Sons of toil!"

Whence come the bold and gallant leaders,  
They who proud defiance wave  
To the enemies of freedom?

From poltroons, or from the brave?  
Hark! The world sends back the echo,  
"From the brave!"

Whence come the intellectual giants,  
Such as ne'er may come again ?  
From the ranks of high-born nobles,  
Or the ranks of self-made men ?  
From the world comes back the echo,  
"Self-made men !"  
1884.

## PERSEVERANCE.

---

Who well would play life's tragic game,  
And thereby win immortal fame,  
Must bear in mind his lofty aim,  
And persevere.

Though he may find his labors hard,  
And foes would fain his steps retard,  
His purpose he must ne'er discard ;  
But persevere.

Though he may sorely be oppressed,  
And paths of vice may seem the best,  
He must with courage bear the test,  
And persevere.

Though fortune may upon him frown,  
And seem inclined to force him down,  
He must resolve to win the crown,  
And persevere.

Though he may stumble, even fall,  
If he would triumph over all,  
He must his flying hopes recall,  
And persevere.

1880.

## INDEPENDENCE.

---

Have thoughts thine own!  
Put ideas to the test!  
Grasp firmly what are good—  
Forsake the rest!

Fear not the critic's tongue,  
Nor e'en his pen;  
But be thou as a man  
'Mong fellowmen!

1882.

## AN ATIONAL POEM.

---

We are, and will remain, one NATION !  
Sound it forth o'er all creation !  
Make every mind its destination !  
Teach it to the rising generation !  
Let its deep reverberation  
Roll, with thunderous intonation,  
Till freemen, without hesitation,  
Declare, with firm determination,  
"We'll have no such abomination  
As disunion, or confederation !  
We'll stoop not to such degradation !  
We'll bear to the world no mean relation ;  
But support our *national* reputation ;  
Preserve the freemen's reservation ;  
Have no change but annexation ;  
Keep just laws in operation ;  
Work for the right without cessation ;  
And work for *national* elevation  
Till the world shall bow in veneration  
Before our *glorious, honored* NATION !"  
1879.

## DEAL JUSTLY !

---

Condemn not him who would do right,  
If perchance he should go astray.  
Cast not upon his name a blight—  
Strew not with thorns his life's path-  
way ;  
For he may with true courage rise  
And struggle with himself and win,  
And he may show, through honest eyes,  
The sense of right that burns within.  
1879.

## RIPPLING WATERS.

---

Bright in its beauty life's morning is glowing—  
Clear and unruffled life's river is flowing—  
But soon or late shall clouds appear,  
And rippling waters be sounding near.

Gently we glide on the breast of the river—  
Cheered by the sunbeams that over us quiver—  
But soon, ay soon, shall clouds appear,  
And rippling waters be sounding near.

Swiftly we speed—with the tide we are flying—  
Ever for peace and for rest we are sighing—  
Anon the angry clouds appear,  
And rippling waters are sounding near.

Softly the twilight is over us stealing—  
Slowly the beauties of Nature concealing—  
Anon the gloomy clouds appear,  
And rippling waters are sounding near.

Night gathers round us—we pass from the river—  
Never again shall the mid-day heat quiver—  
And ne'er again shall clouds appear,  
Nor rippling waters be sounding near.

1885.

## THE SPOILS SYSTEM.

---

Arouse, arouse, ye patriots !

Prepare yourselves for fight !

For there's a day not far away

When we must try our might.

The *spoils system*, our tyrant foe,

Still rules with iron sway.

Its slaves are legion, and its gold

Has bought unnumbered friends, who hold

Aloof from duty's way.

Then rally for the conflict, men !

Espouse the cause of right !

And we will show our tyrant foe,

How patriots can fight.

Strike off your chains ! Resolve to be

By reason ever led !

Be independent ! And the day

Will surely come we can say

"The *spoils system* is dead !

1882.



## THE COMING DAY.\*

---

There will surely come a day—

Happy day—

When ye patriots can say—

Truly say—

“We are masters of the field!

We’ve compelled our foes to yield,

And the tyrant’s† doom is sealed—

Sealed for aye!

And the sceptre we shall wield

Many a day!”

Slow but sure ’tis drawing near—

Drawing near—

And ere long it will be here—

Yes, be here.

Then our politics shall be

From this foul corruption free,

And the world shall pause to see

Our career.

Every foe shall bow the knee—

Bow in fear.

1882.

\* Companion piece to THE SPOILS SYSTEM.—*King.*

† The “Spoils System.”—*King.*

## TO AN AGED MAN.

---

O aged man, with hoary head,  
    With faltering voice, uncertain tread,  
What hast thou done, in years gone by,  
    That's worn the brightness from thine  
        eye,  
And made thee but a battered form,  
    Like foundering bark in ocean's storm?  
Hast thou a life of duty spent,  
    With thoughts on right and truth intent,  
Or hast thou passed thy manhood by  
    In vanities and misery?  
1880.

## A SOLILOQUY.\*

---

Oft have I been in meditation lost,  
In solemn thought, in reverie profound;  
And oft-recurring thoughts my mind have  
crossed,  
And in them have I consolation found.

My soul have they lulled to calm repose,  
The voice of pride and of envy have they  
stilled,  
They have caused life to seem bereft of woes,  
And my soul with deep reverence have  
they filled.

Deep and earnest thought improves the mind,  
And brings it to the fount of truth to  
drink;  
And if one would essay truth to find,  
He must learn the liberal art, how to  
think.

Through all the dark ages, forever fled,  
Vast stores of truth were to man un-  
known,

\* My first poem.—*King*.

That time has produced, as from the dead,  
And the hosts of unbelief are overthrown.

But all the stores of truth are not yet found—  
There are mysteries as in the days of  
yore,  
And, though man may search creation round,  
There will still be mysteries for evermore.

When Nature in her robe of spring is dressed'  
And all the air with melody is rife,  
And all things seem to breathe of peace and  
rest,  
O, then my soul is stirred with new life.

When black, storm-driven clouds are piling  
high,  
And crashing, deafening peals of thunder  
roll,  
And fierce gleams of lightning flash athwart  
the sky,  
Then mingled joy and awe pervade my  
soul.

If one be bowed by grief, or racked by pain,  
He would best be calm, and think 'twill  
soon be o'er ;  
For as the storm exhausts the store of rain,  
So storms of life will cease for evermore.

When man has ceased to draw his wonted  
breath,

And his spirit from the earthly mold has  
fled,

And his eyes assume the glassy stare of death,  
Then will he be numbered with the dead.

Some, though they are gone, may not be dead,  
But living still in many a human mind,  
And the light of their genius may be shed,  
For ages, o'er the world left behind.

But some, to the world, are dead when they  
die,

And humanity sheds not for them a tear,  
And they in the ground forgotten lie,  
And there's naught left to show they e'er  
were here.

If one would make his life a grand success,  
He must not to ambition be a slave,  
For 'tis dangerous such a master to possess,  
As 'twill but lure him on to the grave.

He must not endeavor wealth to amass,  
For it brings care and trouble to the mind,  
And it may vanish, like dew from the grass,  
And leave bitter disappointment behind.

He must ever stand firmly for the right,  
Though he, by the hosts of Satan, be hard  
pressed :

He must battle for his cause with all his  
might,  
Till his heart has ceased to beat within  
his breast.

His character must be his constant care,  
His faults he must discover and o'ercome.  
To brave public opinion he must dare,  
And when he should not speak he must  
be dumb.

In idleness he must not waste his time,  
But improve each fleeting moment ere  
'tis past,  
Or the road to success he ne'er may climb,  
And his life may be a failure at last.

Be one poor and lowly, or rich and great,  
He must share the common inevitable  
doom.

For the stern summons he has not long to  
wait—

He will soon be laid to rest in the tomb.  
1879.

## THE HEART AND ITS IDOL.

---

A heart its fond affection pours  
Down at its idol's feet,  
And opens wide its secret doors,  
Its innermost retreat.  
Its wealth of love is lavished there,  
The fountain flows unstayed,  
And all commands the idol fair  
May give shall be obeyed.

The idol bids the loving heart  
To stop the fountain's flow,  
And with its wealth of love depart,  
And nevermore to show  
By look, or sign, or deed, or word,  
The love which it had shown,  
And never let its chords be stirred  
By hopes it once had known.

The heart obeys—its doors are closed—  
The fount is stopped and sealed—  
And love is from its throne deposed—  
Affection's tide congealed.

The once fond heart can nevermore  
So joyous be, and kind.  
A stoic's life spreads out before—  
A cynic's life behind.

1884.



## WHAT DO YOU THINK ?

---

If the sea of life be troubled,  
    And the angry billows roll,  
And the clouds all darkly gather,  
    Like a pall, about the soul,  
Is it best to sadly ponder  
    O'er the harsh decrees of fate,  
Till the soul is sick of yearning,  
    And is left all desolate ?

If life's sea be calm and peaceful,  
    Shadowless, in splendor bright,  
Lit by morning's gorgeous lustre,  
    Free from shades of coming night,  
Should we seek, in hazy distance,  
    Some approaching cloud to find,  
And, while brooding o'er its coming,  
    Be to present beauties blind ?

If the tides of opposition  
    Seem about to bear us down,  
And, instead of genial brightness,  
    We see many an angry frown,

Should we yield without a struggle  
For our cause, if it be right?  
Should we own ourselves defeated  
Ere we well have tried our might?

If the tides of reckless pleasure  
Bear us toward a rocky shore  
And the hidden reefs of ruin,  
With the surges breaking o'er,  
Should we ride the crested billows  
Unconcerned, though reefs abound,  
Till we're dashed amid the breakers,  
And a nameless grave\* have found?

1880.

\* The sea of oblivion, the common grave of millions.—  
*King.*

## A CENTURY HENCE.

---

The same old spires may tower aloft,  
The same bells ring their tuneful chime,  
The same old walls may echo oft  
The same hymns sung in the same old  
time ;

But other forms shall gather there,  
By others shall the bells be rung,  
And other lips shall truth declare—  
By others shall the hymns be sung.

The same old churchyards may remain,  
The same slabs tell their mournful tales,  
The same impressive silence reign  
O'er the same old mounds and grassy  
dales ;

But other forms may slumber there,  
By others shall the paths be trod,  
And other slabs may witness bear  
That *we* lie moldering 'neath the sod.  
1884.

## THE POLITICAL FIELD.

The political field is a garden,  
Which ever is covered with seeds,  
And some of them grow to be useful,  
Though more of them grow to be weeds.

Each person who votes is a gardener,  
Whose vote is a powerful hoe,  
With which he can dig out the evil,  
Yet leave the good seedlings to grow.

The field is now covered with seedlings,  
And plants that have grown many years,  
And a powerful growth of the evil,  
With the growth of the good, interferes.

This garden must have cultivation,  
Or the plants that are good cannot grow,  
And the bad will be rank and obnoxious—  
Say, gardener, make use of your hoe!  
1882.

## A TRANSFORMATION SCENE.\*

---

See! Now the curtain rises—we behold  
An Arctic winter scene, all drear and cold.  
A mighty ship stands out before our eyes,  
Held fast in fields of ice, 'neath clouded skies.  
Her rigging far above, her hull below,  
Are decked with pendent ice, and clothed in  
snow.

Then comes a change! In the twinkling of  
an eye

The snow-fields disappear 'neath a summer  
sky.

We seem to be in an enchanted land,  
Where gorgeous sights appear on every hand.  
We gaze into a glorious, coral cave—  
Its glassy floor of water has no wave,  
Its walls with gilded splendor are ablaze,  
As though a thousand suns had shed their  
rays

Upon this paradise, to make a spot  
That, once beheld, could never be forgot.

\*Witnessed in Chicago, Christmas night, 1880.—*King*.

About an isle, where fairy forms abide,  
Two lovely water-nymphs are seen to glide  
In boats, which are but shells, each lightly  
drawn

By a beautiful and gently-gliding swan.  
All lost in admiration is the crowd—  
It now sends forth applause both long and  
loud.

1880.

## THE SUICIDE.

---

He sleeps the sleep of death !  
    (That endless sleep)  
He fled from life,  
    Aweary of its care.  
He coolly, calmly planned  
    That fearful leap  
From mortal sphere,  
    Away—he knew not where.

Say not that 'tis a crime  
    To seek for rest,  
To long for death  
    When life cannot be bourne.  
Why should a man remain  
    To be oppressed ?  
Who cares to live,  
    If he must live to mourn ?

Think you that any man,  
    Without a cause,  
Would hate his life,  
    And calmly seek his end ?

Do not? Then speak no ill  
Of him that was!  
Could he return,  
He might his course defend.

1880.



## BLEST BE THOSE DREAMS !

---

Blest be the sweet, alluring dreams,  
That charm my restless, drowsy powers,  
And, like the sun's long-hidden beams,  
Fall bright across my sleeping hours.

O, blissful is their potent spell !  
I fain would have it ne'er depart,  
But ever in my soul to dwell,  
And soothing linger round my heart.

Blest be their memory, though they fly !  
Blest be their far-off, waning gleams !  
O, dark will be the hour when I  
Must bid farewell to happy dreams.

1884.

## AS TIME ROLLS ON.

---

The bloom of youth shall disappear—  
The strength of manhood shall decline—  
The waiting tomb, the pall, the bier,  
Shall execute the will divine—  
As time rolls on.

Our parents fond, companions dear,  
Our brothers noble, sisters kind,  
All that we love, that we revere—  
They shall be lost or left behind,  
As time rolls on.

And things that are, no more shall be—  
Earth's beauties all shall fade away—  
And death shall roam the land and sea—  
And new life blossom o'er decay—  
As time rolls on.

All pain shall cease, all sorrow end—  
Remorse shall lose its poignant sting—  
All joy and grief in death shall blend—  
Oblivion reign o'er everything—  
As time rolls on.

1885.

## STRAY THOUGHTS.

---

An aimless life  
Is a failure.

He really lives,  
Who rightly lives.

Who toils aright,  
Ne'er toils in vain.

To reject a vice,  
Is to gain a virtue.

The soul  
Is purged by sorrow.

Who seeks nobility,  
Should avoid flattery.

Who makes no promise,  
Has none to keep.

Just pride  
Is a commendable virtue.

Down-trodden vice  
May rise again. Beware !

Ambition  
Is the father of civilization.

Civilization travels  
Where genius lights the way.

The loftier the mind,  
The wider its range of vision.

The possessor of a noble mind  
Will have a noble bearing.

He rules the best and longest,  
Whose sceptre is the pen.

Ingenuousness and lofty mien  
Proclaim a man a gentleman.

Great minds are oft inspired  
By the warring of the elements.

None should covet greatness  
Who fear the world's scrutiny.

The whole world seems to man  
Like the narrow sphere he's in.

He who overcomes the tempter,  
Is a ruler o'er himself.

Reason lights the torch of hope,  
And faith keeps it burning.

Truth and error, though extreme,  
Are frequently confounded.

O, Nature, when thou art roused,  
How awful is thy majesty!

O, how the soul of man is calmed  
By woman's love and sympathy.

Reason is often bound  
By the galling chains of prejudice.

Judge every man by himself alone,  
And not by the average man.

Intense feelings and a resolute will  
Make a powerful man.

Thought is a good whet-stone  
With which to sharpen perception.

How fast a few words multiply  
When rolled o'er slanderous tongues!

Opinions should be formed with care,  
And cautiously expressed.

Do all the miser's hoarded gains  
Disperse his cares, or soothe his pains?

A spoken thought oft moves a mind—  
A written one, a million.

Who forms and keeps a good resolve,  
Takes one sure step toward manliness.

Count not thine age by empty years,  
But e'er by sighs and groans and tears.

How few e'er see their youthful dreams  
Change into realities.

Who calmly smiles when sore oppressed,  
Must be of master-mind possessed.

Books are the vaults in which are stored  
The world's most precious treasures.

When the light of hope forsakes the eye,  
It leaves a fixed and glassy stare.

Who'd have a nature free from guile,  
Must learn to frown when demous smile.

The heights of fame are slippery,  
And he who would ascend,  
Must mind his steps.

A single, well-planned master-stroke  
Will do far more, and better, work  
Than scores of aimless movements.

Man cannot live always,  
And ere he has learned how to live,  
It must be his to die.

He who sleeps when he should work,  
May wake to find himself  
Behind the times.

Where one's deceived, it may be years  
Ere he can lay aside his fears,  
Have faith, and trust again.

The heights of fame are rough and steep,  
And cleft by many a chasm deep—  
The road is strewn, from end to end,  
With snares for those who would ascend.

If one would e'er triumph  
In the battle of life,  
He must make a bold onset,  
Nor shrink from the strife.

It seems to me a gentle spirit  
Follows me where e'er I roam,  
And anon I seem to hear it  
Speak of mother and of home.

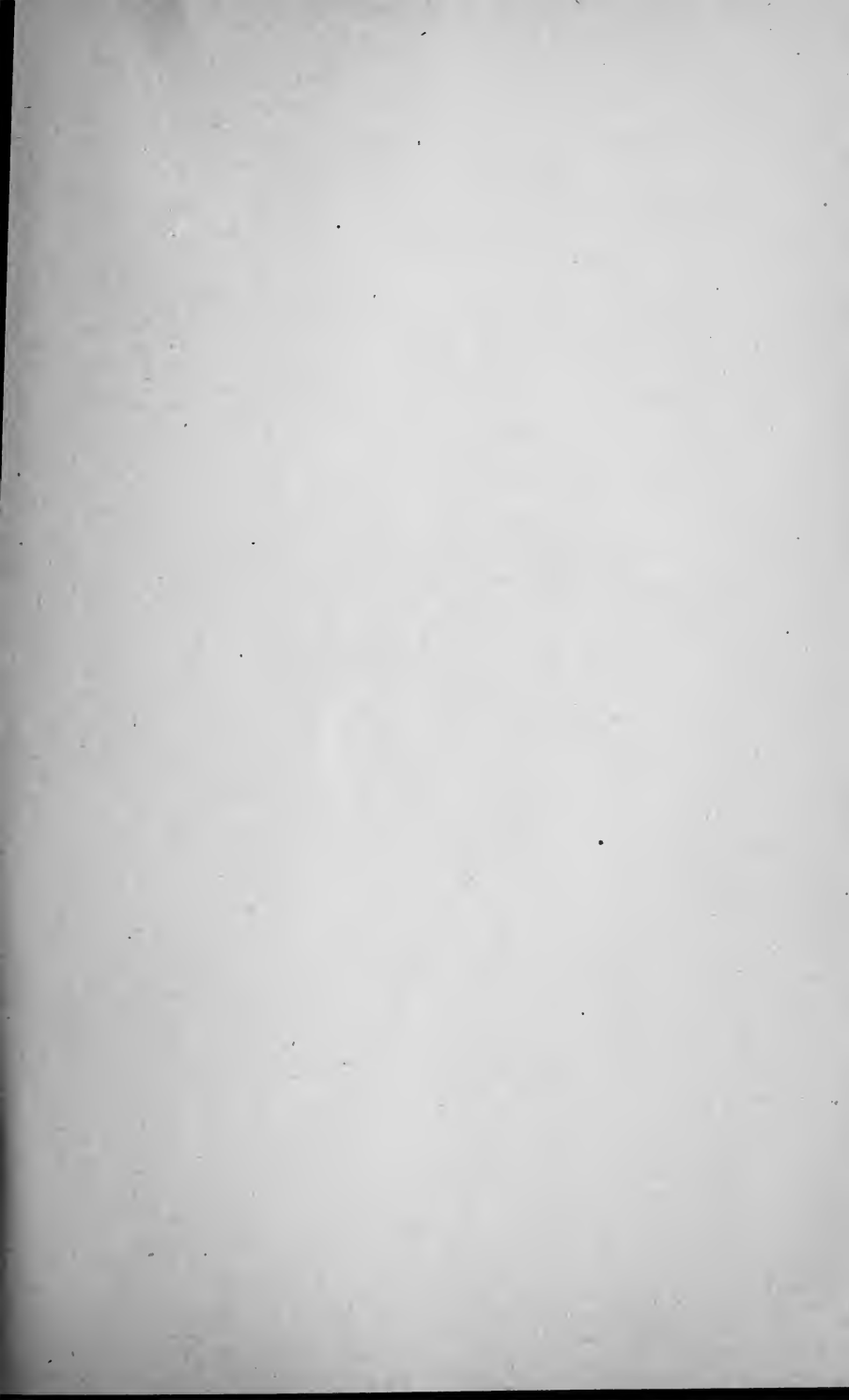
No wounding glance can be recalled,  
Or harsh word lightly spoken;  
For souls by them may have been galled,  
And ties of friendship broken.

When the hour of death is drawing near,  
To still the beating heart,  
Need any one feel aught of fear,  
Who well has borne his part?

O blest, indeed, is every man  
Who for the right does all he can,  
And toils through sorrow, care and pain—  
His work shall not be done in vain.

THE END.









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